

BUILDING SEWER MAINTENANCE

The Municipal Code of the Town of Los Altos Hills contains four sections, among others, which are pertinent to your sewer system concern.

Section 6-4.401(e) Building Sewer shall mean House Sewer.

Section 6-4.401(u) House Sewer or Building Sewer shall mean the extension from the house drain to the public sewer or other place of disposal, which is not less than two (2) feet from any building or structure foundation or footing that faces the Public Sewer.

Section 6-4.443(7) Building Sewer Maintenance. Maintenance of the building sewer (house sewer) shall be the responsibility of the owner of the property served.

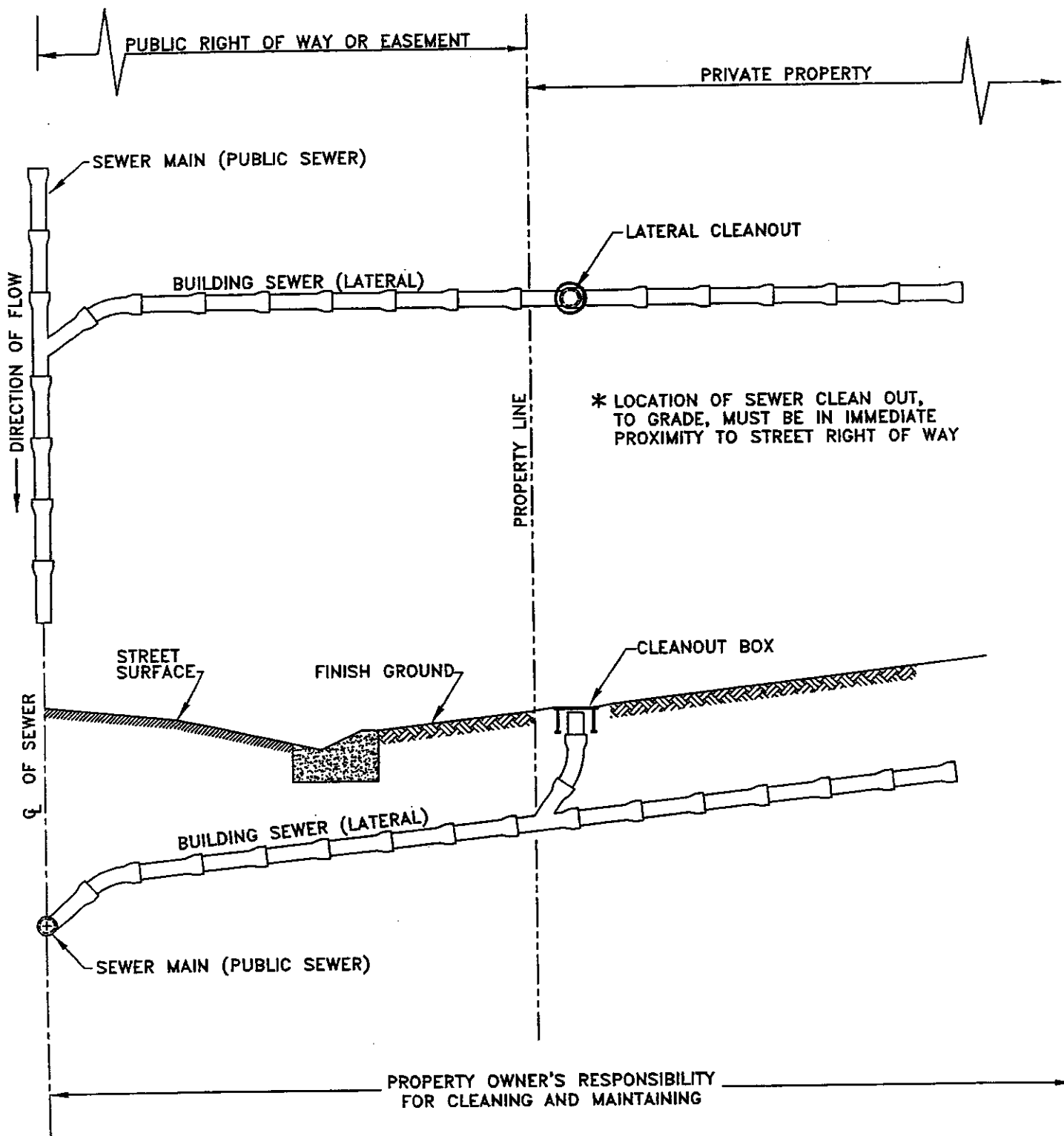
Section 6-4.443(9) Backwater Protection. If the lowest fixture or outlet in any building is below the rim elevation of the nearest manhole, clean-out, or riser upstream from the connection to the public sewer, a backwater valve or overflow device of an approved type shall be installed in the building sewer.

Section 835 of the California Government Code relating to "Absence of liability for injury except under statute: Liability as subject to statutory immunity and defenses" states that except as otherwise provided by statute a public entity is not liable for injury, whether such injury arises out of an act of omission of the public entity or a public employee or any other person. The section states that for a public entity to be liable for injury caused by a dangerous condition of property, the public entity must have "... had actual or constructive notice of the dangerous condition under Section 835.2 a sufficient time prior to the injury to have taken measure to protect against the dangerous condition." It is not reasonable to assume that the Town should be responsible for monitoring the root growth of its trees.

The Town of Los Altos Hills does not service lateral sewers. The Town will only check the main sewer if a plumber or roto rooter service verifies the main is plugged. If the Town tree's root system enters a lateral quite often it is due to misaligned or weakened sewer lateral joints that are leaking moisture into the subsoil.

Improperly maintained sewer laterals are the cause of a vast majority of sewer lateral damages. These damages are caused by tree roots entering the pipe causing it to become blocked. This condition typically occurs after laterals, through old age and shifts in the earth, experience a slight crack in the cement which seals the pipe joint. These cracks leak moisture and attract tree roots which enter the pipe through the crack and cause it to become blocked. Thus, damage results not by the force of protruding tree roots, but from old, worn laterals which have been improperly maintained. Many residents have found that after having the line cleared, regular maintenance doses of root inhibitive compounds are effective in preventing future root growth through the worn laterals. These products are available from hardware stores and root-roter type companies.

Effective Date: October 16, 2005



TYPICAL SEWER SYSTEM
TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS